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Finding a new identity for a township club – the case of the Mighty 5 Star in Stellenbosch¹

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This article analyses how football membership has been transformed in Kayamandi, a township situated on the outskirts of Stellenbosch in the Western Cape province of South Africa. It focuses on the rationales behind membership in the Mighty 5 Star, a Kayamandi amateur club created in 1972, in order to understand the changing interrelationships between the club and the neighbourhood. Based on participatory observations, written sources published by the club on the internet, as well as interviews, this article discusses the various membership processes between the club and the players from 1972 to 2011, characterising the social and urban rationales that have structured and organised them, and situating those rationales, whenever possible, in the history of the political and social changes in South Africa since 1972. The article illustrates how an imported football model can move into spaces hitherto organised around football models which expressed different interests on a local level. Moreover, it shows how north-south sports relations may, at an amateur sport level, transform the social rationales around and interrelationship with an urban territory.

This article analyses how football membership has been transformed in Kayamandi, a township situated on the outskirts of Stellenbosch in the Western Cape province of South Africa. It focuses on the rationales behind membership in the Mighty 5 Star, a Kayamandi amateur club created in 1972, in order to understand the changing interrelationships between the club and the neighbourhood. This study is part of a broader ethnographic research project that has been conducted since 2005 on football in Stellenbosch.² The data are derived from participatory observations, written sources published by the club on the Internet, as well as interviews with current club members (n = 12), and former players, managers and coaches (n = 7). This article discusses the various membership processes between the club and the players from 1972 to 2011, characterising the social and urban rationales that have structured and organised them, and situating those rationales, whenever possible, in the history of the political and social changes in South Africa since 1972.

This study of the Mighty 5 Star covers three periods. The first is the period of apartheid (1948–1994). The discussion here describes the process leading to the

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creation of the club and depicts the membership rationale at work, in which segregation and the set of social markers connected to it – the location of residence in the area and the regional origin of residents – played an essential role. The second stage examines the first post-apartheid decade. The article considers the process of alienation from football in the township and how this influenced membership rationales. It discusses the difficulties of the Mighty 5 Star to draw people based on the criteria of neighbourhood and regional origins formerly used. The third stage, which covers the more liberal post-apartheid second decade, explains the process of ‘professionalisation’ of the club, even though it was still classified as an amateur club. The discussion shows how, on the one hand, players’ professional projects and the ideal of excellence encouraged by the club have become dominant in the sports membership rationale, thus changing the club’s relationship with the neighbourhood. On the other hand, the club has been trying, through a system of selection by trial, to build a different relationship with the town of Stellenbosch, as well as with its other (white and coloured) communities.

The creation of the Mighty 5 Star, or *ekase* football³

The Mighty 5 Star was created in Kayamandi in 1972.⁴ At the time, the township, which had been created in 1955, was characterised by the town planning and social relations established by the apartheid regime. Stellenbosch, a prosperous, prestigious rural settlement, reflects the basic paradox of segregation, in which ‘the Black manpower plays a central role in the economy, while its very existence is denied socially and politically’.⁵ Kayamandi, according to the 1950 Group Areas Act, was an area of residence located on the outskirts of the town. It was defined as a neighbourhood for the black population. In 1966 the area was expanded.⁶ 38 huts called ‘hostels’ were built by the nine major employers of Stellenbosch and its surroundings – fruit farms, wine estates, the town council and the university – in order to accommodate the workers who, with expropriations under the 1913 Native Land Act, were forced to hire out their labour, thus providing cheap, if vulnerable, human resources. Kayamandi became home to a large community of migrant workers, who contributed to increasing the proportion of the black population of Stellenbosch from 0.5% of the town’s residents in 1970 to 7.8% in 1980.⁷ In those days, the migrants were mostly black people from the Eastern Cape.

The Mighty 5 Star is a result of that political and social configuration; it is in line with the pattern of development and sponsorship by major firms for black football described by sports historians who have studied South African football.⁸ Following this pattern, the club was the expression of two expectations. For the Stellenbosch Farmers’ Winery, it was a means to improve discipline among the workers, to ‘moralise their leisure time’⁹ and to make them permanent residents in Kayamandi and deter protest or activism. For the workers, mostly migrants from the Eastern Cape and living in the hostels, membership of the club was a means to recreate their regional identity and to gain a sense of formal existence. As Peter Alegi writes, company clubs – the Mighty 5 Star was once named the Matel 5 Star, after the Martell Brandy Company, which succeeded the Stellenbosch Farmers’ Winery¹⁰ – were usually the institutionalised expression of informal football activities.¹¹ As described by Ian Jeffrey, such informal activities were organised in the neighbourhoods and comprised street teams formed according to local affinities between neighbours, and usually based on common regional origins.¹² In Kayamandi, those

social criteria generally determined membership of the club. A former Mighty 5 Star player said in an interview:

I used to play for Matel because I came from the Eastern Cape. My father was employed in a wine company in Stellenbosch. When I joined him, I played in that team because he was involved in it; I took it for granted.¹³

Another former Mighty 5 Star player explained:

My parents were very poor. I was living in the squatters' area. All the families were from the Eastern Cape; they were working in Stellenbosch, and they were for Matel. The moment you came from over there, you just played for Matel.¹⁴

The apartheid order, in which rank was assigned to different population groups and every sector of social life was divided accordingly, also fostered the idea that sport membership was predetermined. For example, the definition of racial groups set in the 1950 Population Registration Act, which established 'races' and 'sub-races', turned people's complexion, regional origin and language into powerful criteria either for exclusion or solidarity, thus reinforcing the idea that one's origin determined one's sport tastes and practices. As far as football was concerned, within the African community, such criteria were mobilised in social competition, for example to reinforce the sense of belonging among the members of a group depending on their regional origin. This in turn caused those categories to be boosted in their role as factors of order and elements of predestination, although, as François-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar writes, they were only social constructions.¹⁵

Analysing the football practices of those days and what some of the interviewees in their forties called 'ekase football' sheds light on the strong link between a neighbourhood club and the local population. First, it demonstrates the important role of the local environment in the process of learning how to play. In fact, many clubs did not have any football schools. The rules and the techniques of the game were learned in the street, and for basic security reasons, in the narrow streets where people lived. This environment fostered close interaction with the local residents, who indirectly participated in playing – by returning the ball, commenting an action, and so on – and created a proximity that encouraged their symbolic association with the team and its players. Secondly, as Jeffrey indicates in another context, the learning also took place in the course of informal street tournaments against teams that represented other areas in the neighbourhood.¹⁶ Though such contests were often played for money, they still reinforced the players' identification with the place where they lived, as well as with the residents, as they had to defend their honour in order to be respected in the informal sport hierarchy of the township. As Jeffrey reports, such contests could cause lasting rivalry, which some young players also experienced beyond the sphere of sport. For instance, they had to be very careful when choosing their route through the neighbourhood, so as not to meet any adversaries who would pursue them if ever they were alone, far away from their home base.¹⁷ Among players, such street rivalry was an essential element of their loyalty to their own area of residence, to the neighbourhood residents, as well as to the club that represented them. This identification with the team is expressed in the following statement of a former player:

Before I played for Matel, I learned how to play in the street. I played with neighbours. We challenged other streets in matches or tournaments. Sometimes we would have small

bets. We represented our area, that of the Eastern Cape migrants, which supported Matel. In those days, I could not imagine myself supporting or belonging to a different team.¹⁸

Those former players who are now in their forties associate *ekase* football also, however, with the memory of a strong social divide in the township where two groups were in conflict. This divide was based on the tension between newcomers and those who had been living there for a while, as a former Mighty 5 Star player puts it:

On the one hand, those who were ‘born and bred’ in Kayamandi, who lived in houses and believed they were the ‘moral owners’ of Kayamandi because they had organised the space, the values of the place; and on the other hand, people who had been living in Kayamandi for a long time, lived in hostels and shacks, but had not been born there; who had brought a new dimension and wanted to impose that dimension on those who were natives of the area.¹⁹

Thus, football illustrates the challenge of social integration in the neighbourhood, as each club represented one of the competing groups. A former Mighty 5 Star member explained:

Santos was designed by natives of Kayamandi, people who mostly lived in the houses sector. Matel 5 Star developed as a rival club for Santos. The Matel 5 Star was predominantly formed by people who lived in the Kayamandi hostels, and mostly came from the Eastern Cape and the neighbouring regions.²⁰

In this social and sport context, the derby between the two Stellenbosch teams Matel and Santos was a landmark in the township sociability, where club membership based on a criterion of regional and spatial origin was crucial. First, the partisan passion it entailed was a means to reassert and reinforce the sentiment of group belonging. The regional origins and the area of residence in the township were reaffirmed. Such social markers were used to emphasise differences – for example Eastern Cape migrants were named ‘*Moggoez*’²¹ and certain areas in the neighbourhood became dangerous for the respective opponents. They also were useful in highlighting the value of keeping to one’s own circles, by giving the group a sense of solidarity and unity, which in the members’ memory would equate *ekase* football with joy and collective passion:

In those days, it was an important event. There were crowds of youth and elders and women and children, all Kayamandi was there. People would sing, we sang a lot to cheer Matel up. We would also sing in reply to the Santos supporters. Around the field there were usually two factions – on one side were the Santos supporters, and on the other, us.²²

Secondly, the results of the derby either reinforced or toppled the social hierarchy prevailing in Kayamandi. The fate of the group predominated over the selection of the players, though, as Christian Bromberger and Jean-Marc Mariottini showed,²³ individual performance was a means to cheer up the community if the team was defeated, where a player’s feats could save the collective honour. A club thus reflected a group’s aspiration to establish itself in the neighbourhood, and membership was inspired by the dynamics of integration and the recognition connected to it, rather than by the club’s sporting excellence over a given season. The question was not just to win, but to win for the neighbourhood:

When I was young, the Matel-Santos derby was a must. All Kayamandi was attending. It usually took place after the morning service, on Sunday afternoons. What mattered was the result, not the game. We wanted to find out which was best, who would rule over the neighbourhood.²⁴

In the memories of former players and club members, *ekase* football is described as football closely embedded in Kayamandi everyday life because it was born on its very streets and was supported by the majority of the residents in the township who identified themselves by its social tensions. In this context, the club was not a 'singular-minded'²⁵ enterprise aimed at creating differences, but a collective expression that sought to create solidarity and integrative membership – which is why regional origins and the area of residence were valued as links that brought together large portions of the local population.

The dissociation of the club from the group and its territory

From our interviews, it appears that from 1994, with the end of apartheid, the membership process changed. This was accompanied by a transformation in the interrelationship between the club and its neighbourhood. Kayamandi had clearly expanded by then – it accommodated 14,754 residents, or 12% of the population of Stellenbosch.²⁶ Like all South African townships, it was included in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), launched by the new government to make up for past injustices through public investment. The programme was laying the foundation for a new urban policy by implementing administrative reform (politically and administratively unifying formerly divided urban territories) and economic reform (through fiscal systems aimed at economic redistribution from the more privileged to the underprivileged areas).²⁷ In addition, it promised to build 1,000 flats within the next five years. The townships thus benefitted from a spatial adjustment, with better basic services (such as in education, water and electricity supply and health care), more housing, and so on. However, Philippe Gervais-Lambony writes that the reform did not directly change the fragmented-space characteristic of apartheid towns, even if it made it more equitable.²⁸ During the transition period, Kayamandi did not witness any deep changes. It was still a satellite area of Stellenbosch, marked by the slow wearing-away of the vicissitudes of apartheid. Football clubs in the township, for example, continued to play in a separate league, and they were still managed by the Kayamandi Football Union.²⁹ Moreover, as Ashwin Desai writes, that period of liberation was fraught with contradictory impulses, so that it was sometimes difficult for the township residents to understand what was going on.³⁰ The forms of membership and sociability that used to be imposed by the imperious apartheid regime were replaced with different rationales, born of new expectations. In the eyes of many Kayamandi residents, *ekase* football was no longer so attractive; it was no longer a major centre of interest in the neighbourhood. A fissure emerged between the clubs, the residents and the neighbourhood.

This rupture is regularly mentioned in the interviews. One reason for the fissure was a new social image of the street, which was no longer perceived as the 'virtuous' space which used to feed football identities. The street now represented a place of decay that allowed for immoral, dangerous forms of leisure, driving the residents away from their former preoccupations, particularly from football. A former player explained in an interview:

From 1994 people in Kayamandi lost any interest in football. Other forms of leisure had come up in the township. Lots of *shebeens*³¹ were opened, and young people had rather drink, play billiards and loaf about the streets, rather than play football.³²

The street was replaced by the training field as a site for learning, even though interviewees still mentioned informal football games and tournaments on the streets. However, the latter are regularly disparaged in the interviews, unfavourably compared by interviewees with the more prestigious institutional football (as performed in the course of training sessions or official matches). The training fields and the educators there thus appear to be the very opposite of the streets – a space for male sociability which helps protect young people from the dangers of the streets, and where the teaching of the game is perceived to be of a higher standard. Both football and clubs thus drifted away from that form of neighbours' sociability in which regional origins and areas of residence prevailed as criteria to join a club. The training field undermined the link to this sociability all the more, as in Kayamandi it was moved to different locations several times. Though it is difficult to indicate when exactly the locations changed or why, it seems that the initial field, near the old streets of Kayamandi, was used from 1994 onwards to build housing estates, as promised in the RDP. The field was then moved to close to semi-industrial warehouses in a 'buffer zone' on the outskirts of the area, as part of the Human Settlement Programme launched by the Stellenbosch town council in 1996.³³ After that the field was re-done a number of times – as in the 2003–2004 and 2009–2010 seasons – which compelled the players and spectators to rent the field in the neighbouring area, Cloetesville, across the railway, an area inhabited and managed by a coloured community, a fact which caused quite a few problems.³⁴

A second factor which explains the change about the interrelationship between the club and the neighbourhood relates to new forms of social divisions. The population of Kayamandi had clearly increased and the neighbourhood expanded. Such expansion decreased the antagonism between those living there for a longer period and the first set of newcomers. This altered existing oppositions. The Mighty 5 Star and the Santos clubs now found it difficult to recruit members using their traditional criteria based on working place, origin or residence, as groups were no longer formed along those criteria. In the eyes of interviewees aged about 40, the clubs were now groups made up of strangers or members of miscellaneous origins:

The teams were no longer so attractive to Kayamandi residents. We didn't really know the players. We didn't know where they came from or who they were. A player could move to a different team every season. I could hardly feel at home in the club.³⁵

A change also occurred in the way the clubs were funded. The former donors withdrew, compelling clubs to find not only new sponsors but new forms of organisation. In the late 1990s, the Santos club went through a difficult time, due to internal conflicts and financial instability. Around the year 2000, sponsoring for Mighty 5 Star from Pernod Ricard, who had bought Stellenbosch Farmers' Winery, dried up.³⁶ In 2003 an ambitious chairman took the club over – Elvis Mongezi Hermans, an archetype of the black upper class, eager to ride the wave of modernity through football.

The decline mentioned by former players was concurrent with the increased televising of European championships in South Africa after 1994, as noted by Alegi.³⁷ European football – with its championships, prestigious teams and great players – became a model, transforming local football. On the one hand, as some of

our interviewees said, the broadcast of European football caused some Kayamandi residents to lose interest in the matches played by neighbourhood teams, as they thought the quality was not high enough:

People stopped coming to see the matches. They had rather go to a *shebeen* to drink or watch European matches on television. Some also stayed at home to watch. The Kayamandi clubs only attracted those who were involved in them, like the players or young players, or sometimes parents.³⁸

On the other hand, through the major European clubs and their celebrities, such broadcasts imported a football model that emphasised the emergence of new rationales in football membership, characterised by growing ambitions for distinction and prestige, as the clubs as well as the players got inspiration from it.

Lastly, if during that period, according to our interviewees now in their forties, the clubs' traditional roots weakened, it was also due to a generational shift, with members moving away from that model of solidarity as they grew older. One of the former Matel player noticed:

Before I came to Kayamandi to join my father, before I played for Matel 5 Star, I had been a student in the Eastern Cape. While I was playing for Matel, I was working in education already. In 1994 I had opportunities. Now I am working in the administration of the penitentiary at Paarl. I am still on the board of the Mighty 5 Star, but I'll be quitting soon. I no longer belong in the football world.³⁹

Some of them, who had employable qualifications, seized the opportunities afforded by the new democracy to improve their social status. Overall, the clubs, which during the apartheid period used to work as means of climbing up the social ladder, are no longer considered a space attractive enough to assert one's status, an aspiration which, for the emerging black middle class, for example, currently involves, as Sophie Chevalier writes, leaving the townships.⁴⁰

New links between the players and the clubs – the Mighty 5 Star since 2003⁴¹

In 2011 the population of Kayamandi was estimated at 33,000.⁴² As Larry Zietsman writes, by 2007 the African community had become the second-largest population group of Stellenbosch – it was then 23.5% of the residents, while coloureds comprised 54.8%, whites 21.4% and Asians 0.2% of the town's total population.⁴³ The town's demographic structure has changed. The township is still growing, and is now covering an unevenly developed surface of 79 hectares.⁴⁴ Since 1996, it has benefitted from the Integrated Human Settlement Programme set up by the Stellenbosch town council and the Kayamandi Urban Renewal Project, which aims at turning the area into 'a place where people can live in dignity'.⁴⁵ New infrastructure was built in Kayamandi. This includes new housing estates, including 3,000 houses built from 1996 to 2008 by Dennis Moss Partnership,⁴⁶ a tourism corridor which was completed in 2006 and has been in use since 2010,⁴⁷ and a stadium which had not yet been completed on my last visit in 2010. The unemployment rate, although difficult to estimate, is still high in Kayamandi (in excess of 30%).⁴⁸ The township's economy is characterised by a strong informal sector,⁴⁹ with few formal firms based there – a legacy from apartheid, which placed restrictions on any form of legal economic activity in the townships.⁵⁰

On the whole, from 1996 poverty reduction and land development in Kayamandi were effected along the neoliberal lines of the Growth, Employment and Reconstruction (GEAR) programme. This encouraged privatisation of services, rationalisation of public investments and the search for partnerships with the private sector in niches deemed of interest to domestic and foreign investors, and hence profitable. The economic stimuli created from such investments were expected to reduce poverty.⁵¹ The programme was also urging the black community to actively engage in reconstruction, to embrace entrepreneurship and to take ownership of their destinies. In our view, such a neoliberal discourse, combined with the imported model of European football, strongly shaped the new interrelationship between the club and the neighbourhood. The neoliberal discourse can be said to have underlined for the players and the members, seeking social promotion, the necessity of individualism. As for the Mighty 5 Star and its governing body, it became a certainty that football was indeed a 'profitable' niche, provided it aimed at excellence – which implied, inter alia, that they had to enlist local football talents.

In joining the club, the players and certain members of the Mighty 5 Star were thus clearly motivated by a professional project, using football to various degrees to improve their condition. From such a perspective, moving from one club to another cannot be perceived as failing to be loyal to a group or a territory, but as a means to carry out one's project, to have more chance of success, and thus to have greater control over one's destiny, just like the stars of African football who are playing in Europe. A member of the under-17 team of the Mighty 5 Star, said:

Before I played for the Mighty 5 Star, I used to play for the Mighty Peace, for the Kayamandi Cosmos and Stellenbosch United. Now I am with the Mighty 5 Star, but if another team may help me carry my project out through football, then I would join it, whether it is in Johannesburg or in France.⁵²

In that kind of personal strategy, a club is attractive when, like the European models, it works along professional lines, even if, like the Mighty 5 Star, it is only an amateur club. In the eyes of the players, a club's capacity to embody that model is linked to the club's management and their social position, itself a reflection of managers' ability to control their lives and to be successful entrepreneurs. That is what a player with the Mighty 5 Star premier team liked about it:

I started playing football because I wanted to become somebody important thanks to football. In Kayamandi, the Mighty 5 Star is the team with the best management. It is the one that is best-structured, it is considered a very professional team. They do everything in a very professional way, and I believe they are the best. The club is different from the others in that the managers are successful in their daily life, they are socially advancing. Unlike the managers of other teams, those of the Mighty are educated.⁵³

A club's credibility is also to be measured by the prospects it offers its players of getting access to training or employment, taking them closer to admission into the kind of structure that many young players in Kayamandi dream of, the *soccer academy*, which represents the first step to success and a promise of significantly enhancing one's life chances. As another player stressed in an interview:

The Mighty staff are helping me build up a project. They have given me a few rules by which I should abide. They all have degrees and they are successful in life. They are good examples on which to build mine. They also have contacts in Johannesburg as well as abroad, they have everything.⁵⁴

The same strategy is also to be found among some of the club's coaches and managers who are seeking social mobility. Membership of Mighty 5 Star is a means to get qualifications or to prepare for it, and to build up a network full of opportunities. The club is a resource likely to help improve their condition by means of the competencies they have acquired or implemented there. Football is viewed as an innovating space which makes it possible not only for players but also for coaches and managers to reach their goals, as advocated by the neoliberal discourse directed at them:

At first I was on the staff of a Kayamandi team named the Jomo Boys. Then I realised they were not very serious. They had no project. In contrast, the Mighty 5 Star were interested in training, they had a vision for the future. That is why I joined them. I wanted to get somewhere by engaging in football in Kayamandi; I wanted football to bring me opportunities to build up my life.⁵⁵

The wish to be successful according to the model of European football, combined with the South African government's support to entrepreneurship, has thus reshaped, in some cases, the rationale for joining the club. It is no longer fed by belonging to a group of people from the same region, living in a particular area and working for the same company. Rather, it is influenced by the prospects of social advancement that the club skilfully feeds by trying to re-create a vertical sports dynamic (ranging from the players' personal development to a professional flagship team) as well as a horizontal one for solidarity (providing subsidiary assistance outside the sports spheres), as some major European clubs do.

The Mighty 5 Star is now positioned in the sport-and-associations world of the township as a club aimed at excellence. It is led by Elvis Mongezi Hermans, who has a good position in a major multinational company in the region. In that respect, the management of the Mighty 5 Star is close to the tradition of the 'big men' described in South African football literature,⁵⁶ although it is a version influenced by the neoliberal urge for the black elite to grasp modernity. The club's identity, which has been transformed,⁵⁷ well illustrates that drive for excellence, as shown by the club's motto: 'It's a question of style'; its vision: 'Good to great'; and the pillars of its strategy: 'Growth', 'Value' and 'Responsibility'; as well as 'winning organisation' (aimed at developing, nurturing and retaining talents). It is also exemplified by the club's objective to join the Vodacom league and to create a soccer academy, through which the club hopes it will be 'meeting sporting challenges of the twenty-first century through education, development [...] by developing foundation for future soccer stars'.⁵⁸

It is through that philosophy and those multi-faceted projects that the club is interacting with the population of Kayamandi. In addition to the prestige which it strives to secure through its ambitions and the quality of its managers, the social, sport and development aspect, as reflected in the monitoring of young players during training sessions and the various kinds of assistance offered to them,⁵⁹ maintains a strong link with the neighbourhood. This is shown by the population, almost all of them young players in the club's various categories, and their relatives who loyally attend the Mighty 5 Star matches whenever the premier team is playing at home. The ethnographic study of fandom confirmed that the link between supporters and the club is based mainly on a professional ethos modelled on that of European footballers (who are able to take the heat out of an encounter, even if it is a derby; to consider the players of the other team not as 'opponents', but as potential team

members, and the other club as a potential employer).⁶⁰ This also explains why provocations are avoided.

The other means by which the Mighty 5 Star interacts with the neighbourhood is through a code of conduct which club members are strictly required to abide by. It is also based on the 'professional' ethics mentioned above. It allows the club to 'manage' its reputation,⁶¹ as each of its members stands for the Mighty 5 Star and its principles in their daily lives:

Professionalism is the other dimension which we insist on and emphasise. As I have said, we are a 'brand'. We insist that we must work like professionals and the behaviour of everyone must have the Mighty 5 Star shown off to advantage. That is why you would never see any Mighty 5 Star members misbehaving in public or during a match. We are very strict about that discipline and form of ethics. That's the way we manage the club. It is our brand and we mean it to be associated with that kind of attitude.⁶²

That kind of management makes it possible for the Mighty 5 Star both to control its image and to reinforce the 'singular' link it means to establish with the neighbourhood. The code of conduct regulates the behaviour of the members. For instance, the young players have integrated it into their social festivities, as a player in the premier team mentioned:

Like all young people my age, from time to time I have some partying, some drinking, I have affairs with girls. In Kayamandi, when I party, I try to be inconspicuous. There are bars to which I never go. I belong to the Mighty and we want to keep a good image, as serious players and a serious team.⁶³

The code also serves as a sift – by testing how an individual can respect it, it reveals whether there is any compatibility between the individual and the club, which makes it possible to select the right players and get rid of 'dissident' elements:

In the township these days, the Mighty 5 Star can be viewed as a 'brand'. Those who do not conform to our rules of conduct cannot join us. This applies both to young people and the staff. It is a fundamental principle of how we work.⁶⁴

Thanks to its policy of selection, in which an exclusive solidarity flourishes, the club attracts new members who usually wish to distinguish themselves. In that way the club establishes a new relationship with the neighbourhood as, on the one hand, the latter is no longer viewed through predetermined territories and, on the other hand, it is now considered as a reservoir of talents who are drawn to membership by being distinctive. The club thus offers an approach to football in conformity with the ideal imported by the media, one quite unfamiliar in such a small area as Kayamandi, situated as it is far away from the major urban or football centres of the country.

Since 2010, the bid to establish a new relationship with the surrounding region has taken on a new dimension among the senior managers of the Mighty 5 Star, who are ever-keen on carrying out their project. The club has established a model of selection by trial, in order to recruit players from towns other than Kayamandi. This strategy was motivated by higher levels of competitiveness in the football world, which have also grown fiercer in Stellenbosch since 2005, when the South African Football Association (SAFA), through the 'demarcation policy framework' national programme,⁶⁵ entrusted the Stellenbosch Local Football Association (SLFA) with the task of bringing all the clubs in the municipality and the surrounding areas together into a single administrative and sport organisation. As a result, in

Kayamandi and in Stellenbosch, other quality teams are trying, just like the Mighty 5 Star, to move from the SAB league to the upper division, that is the semi-professional Vodacom league.

In the municipality, the Mighty 5 Star is not the only club which wants to become an elite centre in Stellenbosch. The Maties club, from the prestigious University of Stellenbosch, is also pursuing the same objective, and they have an additional advantage as they are supported by the university and endorsed by SLFA. Selection by trials does contribute to strengthening the position of the club as professionally organised – just like Maties, which is often mentioned as a model by the Mighty 5 Star managers – to introduce more competition among the players, and to enhance prestige, through the adoption of a mode of selection free from any social prejudice. Above all, the objective is to upgrade the club so that it is perceived as more than just a township club. The trials thus help redefine and re-qualify the club as representing a larger space – not just an area, but a town.

We are an ‘open’ team. The only way for us to get where we want is to be an open team. We are now more varied in the club. We have coloureds, whites, blacks. Those people come from Cloeteville or even from outside Stellenbosch. What matters is for us to represent Stellenbosch as a whole. For us to move up into the Vodacom League will be a great success, but what we want is get beyond. We want to represent the whole of the town, all the population groups who live here.⁶⁶

By using trials, the old divisions between the different groups in the municipality can be overcome, thanks to the two principles on which selections are based – competitiveness and individual worth, both of which were derived from the European football model and its training centres. Once applied to the South African sport context, which is still partitioned, those principles imply that the links based on common neighbourhoods and origins that are still widely used can be replaced with a link based on professionalism, entrepreneurship and individual quality. It thus appears as naturally better suited to overcome the ethnic and urban divisions still prevailing in the football world of Stellenbosch. As a matter of fact, Mighty 5 Star members consider the trials as useful in wiping out certain social markers:

We have now adopted a system of selection based on trials, which in theory eliminates the race criterion in recruitment. With that method, everybody can try. Some coloured players used to be afraid to join a black team; now with that new system, there are two of them in the team. They feel at home with us. And it’s great, now many players want to join the Mighty 5 Star.⁶⁷

Apparently the Mighty 5 Star members are not worried that the open strategy may jeopardise the club’s ‘place’ in Kayamandi and its capacity to represent the township. In their view, there is no risk that they may be blamed for being disloyal to their neighbourhood, thanks to the recruiting method which apparently guarantees that the players have a profile in conformity with the philosophy of the club, and hence of its supporters. A manager of the club explained:

Maybe the identity of the club will change? If it did, we wouldn’t have allowed those players [one white and two coloureds] to play in the team. But we want to judge those people on what they do. If they can play football, if they have the heart for it and they want to play for the team, then we give them a chance. As long as you do the work we want, we’ll take you along. I don’t know how many coloureds we have just now – maybe two, or more.⁶⁸

But then the possibility that the team will no longer be perceived as just a township team is undermined by the persistence of categories, in which people's complexions are still associated with a given area. Another Mighty 5 Star manager said:

Well, after all we are from Kayamandi; that has never changed. We are a team in a township named Kayamandi. If you want to join us, then you must accept that – we are a club of the township.⁶⁹

For the managers we have interviewed, though the Mighty 5 Star players are no longer all from the neighbourhood, because of persisting prejudice the club will always be branded as a Kayamandi club.

Although such a viewpoint about the club's identity may appear original and progressive, it has a clear objective – to present the Mighty 5 Star as an 'enlightened' club which, following European professional models, favours open policies and networks rather than introverted assertions of its identity. By symbolically opening up, the club has taken on a 'cosmopolitan' appearance, so that it may attract the attention of a European club or an external investor if ever they wished to establish a partnership on a franchise or a players' breeding-ground model.⁷⁰

Conclusion

In Kayamandi, the SAFA reform furthered the transition from 'neighbourhood' to 'entrepreneurial' football in line with the European model. Jeffrey observes the same change in the 1970s in the area of Johannesburg.⁷¹ In Stellenbosch, this has occurred markedly since 2005, as several clubs in the town, such as Maties, Glen Eagles or Idas Valley, and in the township, such as the Kayamandi Hotspurs, Mighty Peace or the Mighty 5 Star, started struggling for admission into the upper division and to become semi-professional. However, it appears from our study that the professionalism Jeffrey had observed differs from what we have described in relation to the Mighty 5 Star. Jeffrey writes about how the players' wish to change the status of the club usually implies a turn from amateurism to professionalism, so that their team becomes a source of income, even if that means changing the president. The Mighty 5 Star's professionalism obeys a different pattern. Two sport models influenced by European football coexist in it – on the one hand, a club of excellence that aims at expanding as a brand and playing in a semi-professional division so as to reinforce its local sport prestige; on the other hand, a breeding ground for talents, in which the club is really no more than a 'passer-on' and remains limited from a sport point of view, as its best players are bound to leave, and its local prestige depends on the relationship it can establish with external investors. Such observations illustrate how an imported football model can move into spaces hitherto organised around football models which expressed different interests. Moreover, it shows how north-south sports relations may, at an amateur sport level, transform the social rationales around and interrelationship with an urban territory.

Notes on contributor

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Notes

1. I would like to thank Susann Baller, Scarlett Cornelissen and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions.
2. The author stayed in Stellenbosch from 2005 to 2006 for a post-doctorate fellowship at the University of Stellenbosch, and subsequently for two-week visits in 2008 and 2009, and again for two more in 2010. See also Cubizolles, 'Soccer in a Rugby Town'; Cubizolles *Le football en Afrique du Sud*; Cubizolles, 'Marketing Identity and Place'; Duret and Cubizolles, 'Jouer au Foot dans les Townships'; Duret and Cubizolles, 'Sport, Rivalité et Solidarité dans les Ghetton'.
3. The phrase means 'location football'. It was used several times by former players or former club members when they were referring to football as it used to be played in Kayamandi.
4. A note on the history of the club is at http://www.footbo.com/Teams/TM_Mighty_Five_Star_FC/History (accessed July 4, 2011).
5. Fauvelle-Aymar, *Histoire de l'Afrique du Sud*, 359.
6. Penderis and Van Der Merwe, 'Kayamandi Hostels, Stellenbosch'.
7. Zietsman, 'Recent Changes in the Population', 9.
8. Archer and Bouillon, *Sport et Apartheid*; Nauright, *Sport, Cultures and Identities*; Alegi, *Laduma!*
9. Couzens, 'Moralising Leisure Time', 28
10. http://www.footbo.com/Teams/TM_Mighty_Five_Star_FC/History
11. Alegi, *Laduma!*, 39.
12. Jeffrey, 'Street Rivalry and Patron-Managers', 70.
13. Interview A*, former player, 47, Stellenbosch, April 2009. The names of the interviewees have not been recorded in order to keep them anonymous. I only indicate an identification code, the function of the interviewee (such as 'player') and the age.
14. Interview, L*, former player, 43, Stellenbosch, April 2008.
15. Fauvelle-Aymar, *Histoire de l'Afrique du Sud*, 48.
16. Jeffrey, 'Street Rivalry and Patron-Managers', 72.
17. *Ibid.*, 71.
18. Interview, La*, former player, 51, Stellenbosch, April 2009.
19. Interview, A*, former player, 47, Stellenbosch, April 2009.
20. Interview, R*, former member, 50, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
21. A name used for Eastern Cape migrants who were supposed to know nothing of life in the township and could only live among the cattle and sheep.
22. Interview, La*, former player, 51, Stellenbosch, April 2009.
23. Bromberger and Mariottini, 'Le Rouge et le Noir', 83.
24. Interview, F*, former player, 46, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
25. Duret, *Sociologie de la Compétition*, 54.
26. Zietsman, 'Recent Changes in the Population', 10.
27. Guillaume, Johannesburg, 123.
28. Gervais-Lambony, 'Afrique du Sud, les Temps du Changement', 87.
29. Cubizolles, 'Soccer in a Rugby Town', 108.
30. Desai, 'Entre Destruction Néolibérale', 62.
31. A 'shebeen' is a kind of bar. While some are identified and have a sign, others are informal places.
32. Interview, R*, a former player, 45, Stellenbosch, April 2009.
33. Kayamandi Tourism Center, *Architect and Builder* 58 no. 5, October/November 2007.
34. Cubizolles, *Le football en Afrique du Sud*, 112.
35. Interview, La*, former player, 51, Stellenbosch, April 2009.
36. See: http://www.footbo.com/Teams/TM_Mighty_Five_Star_FC/History (accessed July 4, 2011).
37. Alegi, *African Soccerscapes*, 106.
38. Interview, L*, former player, 43, Stellenbosch, April 2008.
39. Interview, R*, former player, 45, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
40. Chevalier, 'Les "Black Diamonds"', 75.
41. The date when Matel 5 Star became Mighty 5 Star, as mentioned in the history presented on the club's webpage: http://www.footbo.com/Teams/TM_Mighty_Five_Star_FC/History (accessed July 4, 2011).

42. In 2006, it was estimated 22,000, with a growth rate of 10% a year.
43. Zietsman, 'Recent Changes in the Population', 9.
44. Cubizolles, *Le football en Afrique du Sud*, 30.
45. Kayamandi Urban Renewal, <http://www.dmp.co.za/services/popup.php?id=31> (accessed August 9, 2011).
46. Company Portfolio Summary, <http://dmp.snowball.co.za/downloads/downloads/dmp-company-portfolio.pdf> (accessed August 9, 2011).
47. Cubizolles, 'Marketing Identity and Place', 33.
48. Zietsman, 'Recent Changes in the Population', 9.
49. Stellenbosch Municipality, 2005, http://www.ghcs.co.za/Town_Planning/Stellenbosch_Preliminary_SDF_Jan06.pdf (accessed August 9, 2011).
50. Guillaume, Johannesburg, 55.
51. Gervais-Lambony, 'Afrique du Sud, les Temps du Changement', 87.
52. Interview, R*, member of the under 17 team of the Mighty 5 Star, 16, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
53. Interview, P*, player of the Mighty 5 Star premier team, 20, Stellenbosch, April 2009.
54. Interview, W*, premier team player, 21, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
55. Interview, G*, manager with the Mighty 5 Star, 29, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
56. Alegi, *Laduma!*; Jeffrey, 'Street Rivalry and Patron-Managers'.
57. In our interviews, recurrent criticism of the change did not concern the fact that in the present identity of the club, the members' Eastern Cape origin has been forgotten, but rather that some of the players are quite unknown. In contrast, that the Mighty 5 Star has been given new values, based on excellence, was deemed a positive move.
58. An excerpt from the GivenGain website, December 16, 2008. The Mighty 5 Star, which used to post the whole of its project on that charity site, is no longer on it. For a brief view of the club's philosophy, see the above mentioned link: http://www.footbo.com/Teams/TM_Mighty_Five_Star_FC (accessed July 4, 2011).
59. Cubizolles, 'Soccer in a Rugby Town', 113.
60. Duret and Cubizolles, 'Sport, Rivalité et Solidarité'.
61. Maltese and Prevot, 'Management de la réputation', 64. Reputation management is based on the perception of the identity of a firm such as it communicates it, but also on the judgment on the actions of the firm and its performances. In view of this, the club is very careful how its members behave, as they influence that reputation, and it is through them that the club advertises the values with which it wants to be identified.
62. Interview, G*, Mighty 5 Star manager, 29, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
63. Interview, W*, player in the premier team, 20, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
64. Interview, Ge*, Mighty 5 Star manager, 30, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
65. <http://www.safa.net/index.php?page=safainformation> (accessed on 13 January 2008).
66. Interview, G*, Mighty 5 Star manager, 29, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
67. Interview, P*, player in the premier team, 21, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
68. Interview, G*, Mighty 5 Star manager, 29, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
69. Interview, Ge*, Mighty 5 Star manager, 30, Stellenbosch, June 2010.
70. Armstrong and Rosbrook-Thompson, 'Les Pionniers de la Franchise de Football', 44.
71. Jeffrey, 'Street Rivalry and Patron-Managers', 90.

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